

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REPORT FOR 2006 DISTRICT VI

STATISTICS

Cases initiated in 2006	455
Approved	421
Requested Information	3
Prosecution Declined	31

Cases resolved in 2006	426
Found Guilty	343
Acquitted	4
Filed	0
Dismissed	58
Declined	21

NARRATIVE

Basis of the Statistics

The above statistics come from a Domestic Violence report generated by the Just Ware database program used in all counties except Cumberland.

Notes on Statistics

Cases initiated and cases disposed of do not match. While there is substantial overlap in the two groups of cases they are not the same cases. Some cases initiated in 2006 were resolved in 2007 or remain pending; these cases are not included in data for cases resolved in 2006. Also, data for cases resolved in 2006 includes a number of cases initiated in 2005 and previously reported. This data is useful in revealing trends from year to year within District 6. Beginning with the 2006 report each prosecutorial district is reporting data in the same format. The state-wide data will be more meaningful with all districts using the same format.

Between 2005 and 2006 the data shows a significant increase in the number of cases initiated, from 362 to 455. This may reflect, in part, more accurate reporting. That also reflects a greater caseload. The 2006 data also shows a similar significant increase in the number of cases resolved, from 304 to 426, and cases resulting in conviction: from 239 to 343. Dismissals and cases declined also increased, but each category represents a small percentage of cases resolved, 14% and 5% respectively.

District 6 continues to increase the use of the new procedure called Deferred Disposition, both generally and specifically in domestic violence cases. This can be a valuable tool. It also means that cases may not be finally resolved until some time later than with a traditional sentencing approach. This may have some impact on the data.

Characteristics of District VI

Four counties make up District VI. There are seven assistant district attorneys and a grant-funded juvenile prosecutor. There were no vacant positions in 2006. The seven assistant district attorneys continue to cover eight courts in the district.

There is no one attorney designated to prosecute all domestic violence cases in the district. The size of the district and multiplicity of courts makes that impractical. Instead, each county's attorneys prosecute the cases in their respective county.

Sagadahoc County continues to have a domestic violence investigator (d.v.i.) who works out of the District Attorney's Office. Knox County has a domestic violence investigator who works out of the Knox County Sheriff's Department. The Waldo County investigator previously was housed in the courthouse at the District Attorney's Office but is now working from the Sheriff's Department. Lincoln County's d.v.i. is based in the courthouse but is separate from the District Attorney's Office.

The Knox County Domestic Violence Task Force continued to meet in 2006. Members still include law enforcement officers, the domestic violence investigator, victim witness advocates, probation officers, assistant district attorneys, defense attorneys, staff from New Hope for Women, and the director of Time For Change, which

is the batterers' intervention program. Sagadahoc County also has an active working group on family violence which addresses similar issues.

Impediments to Prosecution in District VI

Prosecution has been most effective when the d.v.i. is part of the District Attorney's Office and/or is based in the courthouse. There is only one county (Sagadahoc) where the d.v.i. is based in the District Attorney's Office. In other counties, the d.v.i. is not always assigned to follow up and complete all investigations. In some areas there is regular turn-over in law enforcement personnel. New officers do not always do a complete investigation. In the absence of regular and prompt follow-up by the d.v.i. cases can have significant deficiencies.

The impediments to prosecution reported in 2005 have persisted. While deferred disposition can be useful, it can also delay resolution of cases for an additional six months or longer. Domestic Violence Court has been evaluated for Knox County, but not yet implemented. It is expected to begin late in 2007. There are several different types of D.V. Courts now operating in Maine and it is not yet clear which format will operate in Rockland.